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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Rockford Police Collaborate with Rockford-University of Illinois Extension to Launch 4-H Police Academy**

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Police Department has partnered with Rockford-University of Illinois Extension to develop the 4-H Police Academy, an eight-week program that offers fifth grade students an opportunity to positively interact with police officers in a classroom setting.

The 4-H Police Academy is designed to engage students in hands-on, real-time exercises with police officers that focus on effective communication, decision-making, peer interaction, career readiness and physical and emotional health and wellness. Nearly 150 students are expected to be impacted through this program.

Rockford Police school liaison officers Courtney Tillmon and Patrice Turner, and Rockford-University of Illinois Extension 4-H youth development educator Annie Hobson, serve as facilitators for the program.

“This program is a critical element of the Rockford Police Department’s commitment to ensuring a safe and healthy community for everyone,” said Officer Tillmon.

“Every interaction an individual has with the police is an opportunity to cultivate relationships, break down barriers, and impact perceptions,” said Officer Turner. “The 4-H Police Academy offers a forum for students and Rockford Police to begin building upon those opportunities early on.”

The program, which launched the first week of November and runs through late-December, takes place every Thursday at Conklin Elementary School and every Friday at Lewis Lemon Elementary School.

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